Research on entry of corporate sector on retail trade

†1638. SHRI BANWARI LAL KANCHHAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of funds spent to carry out research on the entry of corporate sector in retail trade; and

(b) the details of benefit Government derived from the funds spent on this research?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) A study on impact of organised retail on the unorganised retail sector including small retailers and vendors has been assigned to Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) in March 2007 with a budget of Rs. 59.80 lakh. So far an amount of Rs. 44.00 lakh has been released.

Another study on FDI in India and its Growth Linkages has been assigned to National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in July, 2007 with a budget of Rs. 50.00 lakh. So far an amount of Rs. 30.00 lakh has been released.

(b) The reports of both the studies are awaited. Findings of the above studies funded by the Government would enable formulation of a suitable policy framework taking into account the interests of various stake holders.

Import of palmolin and edible oil

1639. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Palmolin and edible oil are imported liberally;

(b) the quantity of such imports for the last one year;

(c) whether it is a fact that the High Court of Kerala has allowed import of Palmolin through cochin port also;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action Government proposes to take to safeguard the interest of coconut growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Under the present import policy, import of edible oil, except coconut oil is free. In 2006-07, 42.74 lakh MT of edible oil was imported in the country. These imports included 27.66 lakh MT of palm oil.

(c) to (e) Import of coconut oil is allowed only through State Trading Corporation Ltd. Further, the import duty on coconut oil has been kept at 85% to afford adequate protection to coconut growers. On 16.10.2007, Government *vide* Notification No. 39 (RE-2007)/2004-2009 dated 16.10.2007, restricted import of palm oil through Kochi port. This has however been challenged before the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala in Writ Petition Nos. 31397/2007 and 32705/2007. The Hon'ble High Court in its order dated 25.10.2007 stayed the operation of this Notification. The stay granted by the Hon'ble High court was contested by the Government and the stay order has been vacated by the same court on 20.11.2007. At present, the case is still being heard in the Hon'ble High Court of Kerala.